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ABSTRACT

This book examines historical features from antiquity through present times that are important to early childhood scholars. Chapter 1 presents the history of education, including discussions of educational practices from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries in Europe and the United States, recent efforts to merge preschool and elementary curricula, and the impact of the civil rights movement. Chapter 2 examines philosophical influences, including discussions of Comenius, Locke, Rousseau, Itard, Wundt, Vygotsky, the Transcendentalists, and Kant. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical underpinnings of early childhood education, including theories of Piaget, Freud, Erikson, and Skinner, and discusses the use of IQ and cognitive style. Chapter 4 focuses on curriculum and discusses the rise of behaviorism, the Froebelian kindergarten, freedom of experience approach, project method, and Head Start models. Chapter 5 focuses on Montessori education, discussing the freedom of experience, control of experience continuum, and Montessori educational practices and principles. Chapter 6 considers how children's literature provides experiences for which imagination is essential, examining fables and myths, fairy stories, popular children's literature, and multicultural and other literature; this chapter also discusses children as authors, and methods for teaching reading. The final chapter addresses politics embedded in education and the environment of educational commerce as seen in the recycling of theories with accompanying curricular materials and the appearance of self-acclaimed experts in "brain-based education." The book concludes with a selected bibliography of approximately 375 references. Each chapter also contains references. (KB)

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